

Fall 2015

Afripeace Connection Newsletter



Afripeace
DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

A Message from the President

Often, there is a question about the Youth Peace & Cultural Education program: What is it? Why join or support? I decided to focus my message to address this important question, especially as we plan for the next program in Ghana for 2017. The contributions by Pam, a program chaperone to Rwanda (2012) and Ethiopia (2014), and Erinn Cook, former participant in the program will provide some insights into this signature program of the Afripeace Foundation.

The main goal of the Youth Peace and Cultural Education program is to promote youth leadership development through peace and cultural education between the Sacramento/California area youth and their counterparts in Africa, in keeping with the main mission of the Afripeace Foundation, a nonprofit (501(c)(3) organization to promote US-Africa mutual understanding through peace and cross-cultural exchanges.

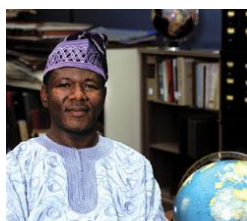
The main objectives of this unique, innovative leadership development program are to: 1) introduce the participants to a personal experience of an African culture; 2) engage the youth in community service projects; 3) develop the students' /youth global understanding and cultural competency; 4) promote community nonviolence and mentoring; 5) develop conflict resolution and problem solving skills; and 6) create long- term exchanges and networking between the Sacramento/California and African youth.

The program objectives are implemented through 100 hours of pre-trip cultural orientation and leadership development training programs, including 40 hours of conflict resolution and team building workshop, fundraiser planning, select readings and discussions on African cultures and politics as well as contemporary issues in peace and nonviolence, youth mentoring, and community engagement. While in Africa the participants will participate in 3 educational seminars, engage in formal and informal discussions and debates with their counterparts about youth development and civic engagement, nonviolence and human rights, and US-Africa relations; they meet with government, religious and community leaders, and visit major educational, cultural and significant historical sites in various parts of Africa. The group will also have a home stay experience with an African family, perform community services at schools and orphanages and engage in conflict resolution simulations and recreational sports with their African counterparts in Africa; each participant will keep a daily journal of her/his experiences in Africa, and share their select experiences via online blogs.

Upon return from Africa, each student/participant will share his/her experiences in Africa with their schools, churches, community, and others. The participants will form alumni of youth peace ambassadors, to promote nonviolence, mentoring, and community service in their respective communities, using both print and social media platforms to disseminate lessons from the program and inspire other youth.

Past participants continue to testify to the positive, life-changing impact of the program, from high school into adulthood: e.g. increase in self-esteem, ability to better handle personal challenges; appreciative of school/community/family, more serious and positive about studies and learning; greater interest in volunteerism; more confident to speak in public; good writing skills; better understanding of US role in the world; effective cross-cultural and conflict resolution; skills, respect for diversity; and new or renewed commitment to peace; interest in foreign service career, or international business, etc.

Peace,
Ernest Uwazie, Ph.D.



Yeselam Mengedegnoch (Peace Travelers) in Ethiopia

by Pam Bodnar

My first journey to the African continent in 2002 left me with a burning desire to return again and again. Africa and her people reached into my heart and soul and never let go. Life has generously afforded me the opportunity to participate in month-long visits in Uganda, Rwanda, and Nigeria. Most recently I traveled to Ethiopia with the 2014 Afripeace **Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program**. As a team leader and chaperone, accompanying ten amazing California teens, I was once again able to behold the beauty and joy of Africa and her people.

Immersing ourselves in the country's music, dance, food, clothing, religion, traditions and daily routines allowed us develop an appreciation of Ethiopia's unique culture. Moving beyond the walls of a traditional classroom, the students engaged in a life-altering educational experience. The team members became "ambassadors of peace", working in a variety of community service projects while engaging with the local residents of all ages to establish personal relationships and friendships. Although we did not share a common language with most of the people we met, we quickly recognized that non-verbal communication was an even more profound way to connect with each other. Watching our students play "football" (soccer), practice universal hand clapping games, feed the babies and attempt to hand-wash clothes with the children in the orphanages, confirmed the importance of face-to-face contact.



I firmly believe the hope for humanity lies in the hands and hearts of our youth. International travel is the path toward deep understanding, acceptance and peace among people. My goal as an educator is to encourage the next generation to explore many cultures and become responsible global citizens.

Imagine Peace!

2014 Summer Youth Peace and Cultural Education Program in Ethiopia

(July 7-August 6)

Project Director: Professor Uwazie

Teacher Guides/Team Leaders in Ethiopia:

Mr. Jeremy Predko & Mrs. Pam Bodnar

Home Support Team:

Mr. Nate Starace & Ms. Patricia Holmes



July 7-August 6, 2014, 10 high school students from Sacramento (CK McClatchy) and Chico-California, plus two teachers as team leaders, visited Ethiopia this summer on a youth peace and cultural education program. The main goal of the program was to promote youth peace and cultural education between the Sacramento/Chico students and their Ethiopian counterparts, in keeping with the main mission of the Afripeace Foundation, a nonprofit (501(c)(3) organization to promote US-Africa relations and mutual understanding through people- to- people exchanges. The main objectives were to: 1) introduce the participants to a personal experience of an African culture; 2) engage the youth in community service projects; 3) broaden the students' global views and cross-cultural understanding; 4) promote peace education and conflict resolution skills; 5) develop problem solving and leadership skills; and 6) initiate long- term cross-cultural exchanges between the Sacramento/Chico and Ethiopian-African youth and schools. Ethiopia's rich history and diverse cultures as well as its landmark location as the Headquarters of the African Union (AU) Commission in the Capital city of Addis Ababa provide a fertile ground for experiential education and practical knowledge on peace and development in contemporary Africa.

The program objectives was implemented through 100 hour pre-trip preparation sessions, including a 5 day conflict resolution training and team building activities, fundraisers for community service projects, and select readings as well as discussion of contemporary issues in Ethiopia/Africa. While in Ethiopia the participants attended 2 academic seminars, exchanged ideas with their counterparts on youth, peace and development, met with various public, religious and community leaders as well as diplomats, and visited key educational institutions, major cultural and significant historical sites in various parts of Ethiopia: Addis Ababa, Acheber/Seden-Sodo district, Hawassa, Bahir-Dar, Gondar, Lalibela, and Kombolcha; the team also visited interacted with officials at the US embassy, the African Union Commission and Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce. The group performed community services at 3 locations in Addis Ababa, Hawassa and Acheber, including orphanage home renovation and food delivery, Math/English tutoring, and pre-school construction. The students experienced urban and rural lifestyles, along with a homestay experience in the village of Acheber- in the Oromia region of Ethiopia.

Each student is now prepared to share his/her experience from the program at their respective schools, churches, and in the general Sacramento/Chico communities, including press write-ups and interviews. The youth participants are recognized as Afripeace youth peace ambassadors for promoting peace education and global/African exchanges. Overall, it was a very successful program that safely achieved its objectives and goals. See students' blogs:

<http://ethiopiatrip2014.wordpress.com>; or itinerary: www.afripeace.org.

Participants' survey showed: 100% of the participants found the program to be educationally and culturally enriching, and personally rewarding. 80-85% said they'll do it again and/or recommend it to others.

Students/Participants:

□ Emma Calvert □ Meghan Larson □ Raina Johnson □ Henry Robinson □ Jessica Gallagher □ Sofia Ringstrom □ Catalina VanSlyke □ Amy Valine □ Skylar Johnson
□ Jackson Yoder

TESTIMONIALS FROM 2014 PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA:

Every time I think of Ethiopia, it brings a huge smile across my face. Reflecting back, it is one of my favorite memories.

I'm glad to be home, but also sad to have left my "Ethiopia group family." I know that this trip will always be special to me and will encourage me to travel more in the future.

It has made me fall in love with Africa, and the emotional complexities it thrusts upon me. Ethiopia has inspired me to become a citizen of the world.

I miss the Motherland!!



Youth peace group historic site visit Ethiopia



Youth peace group's soccer interaction with Ethiopian youth.

My life changing experience in Africa

by **Erinn Cook**

It was nearly ten years (2006) ago that I had the opportunity to spend one month traveling through Ghana and Nigeria through the Afripeace Foundation. I still remember the day that I arrived at the airport to fly across the world to Africa. I was overwhelmed with excitement, curiosity, and fear all at the same time. I had never even been outside of California, and here I was about to fly over an ocean to spend a month on a different continent. I had always been curious about Africa. I was raised with a strong sense of pride for the continent even though I had never physically been there.

My time spent in Africa was one of the most life-changing experiences in my life. I spent one month traveling throughout Ghana and Nigeria with about 12 other students from my high school. Our time was spent in a variety of ways. Some days we met with high-ranking local officials to discuss ongoing issues within the community and state. Other days we spent shopping at the cultural center in Ghana. We volunteered at orphanages, performed manual labor to help build a new school, attended various cultural and religious activities within the community,



visited Cape Coast's slave castle, and much more. Some of my most memorable experiences from my trip were my time spent with the locals. Ghanaians and Nigerians are extremely hospitable people. Nearly everywhere we went, we were met with gifts, song, and dance welcoming us.

I can recall my sweet host mom who my friend Mallory and I stayed with for a number of nights in Nigeria. We called

her mama. She was a strong and beautiful woman who loved to cook. We spent our evenings in the kitchen with her, watching and helping her prepare dinner for the family. One night before she sent us off to bed, she asked us what types of foods we eat for breakfast in America. Mallory and I began listing off common breakfast foods that we ate in America: eggs, sausage, toast, fruit, cereal, juice, potatoes, pancakes, bacon to name just a few. When we awoke the next morning, we came into the kitchen to find that Mama had prepared us a breakfast feast. The dining room table looked like a Thanksgiving feast.

My second host family was just as hospitable. My host sister and I spent the afternoon talking and playing games in her room during a thunderstorm. From the other room, her younger brothers must have overheard me say that I had never eaten a coconut before. They went outside in the pouring rain, climbed the nearest coconut tree, chopped a coconut down and brought it back to me saying, "Everyone should taste a coconut."

The memories I have from my time spent in the Motherland will be with me forever. They have shaped the way that I view the world and the people within it. My trip gave me gratitude and understanding. It opened my eyes to a world I never knew. It connected me to people who I never would have met otherwise. It revealed to me my history. It connected me to my culture. It reminded me that we all are all one. We are fundamentally the same despite our differences. It enlightened me. And for that I am thankful.

Erinn Cook graduated from California State University, Sacramento in 2014, and now teaches at Sacramento High School.

The 2015 Summer Youth Peace Leadership Camp in Nigeria

The 2015 youth peace camp was organized by the Afripeace Sustainable Development Foundation of Nigeria, with the collaboration and sponsorship of her parent Organization in the U.S.A, Afripeace Foundation under the leadership of Prof. E. E. Uwazie, with support from the Center for African Peace Conflict Resolution. The program commenced on the 22nd day of July 2015 with a three day training of the Board of Trustees of the Afripeace Sustainable Development Foundation of Nigeria and 24 peace club coordinators from various secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Professor Uwazie provided the Training of Trainers (ToT) for the peace camp and developed the agenda for the 5 day peace camp for select middle-high school students in Nigeria. The peace camp was held August 10-14th, 2015, in Imo State, Nigeria, with 100 students participating, and 20 teachers/ facilitators.

In addition to the training of the peace club leaders on conflict resolution, peer mediation, health and safety, information technology, leadership, and development of a personal resume, participants performed various community services on day 4 of the program: sweeping/picking up dirt at a local market square, cleaning the school compound, road work, and fetching water and wood as well as repairing the house roof for an elderly widow.





THANK YOU 2015 Nigeria Peace Camp Co-Sponsors:

Prof. Ernest E. Uwazie Foundation

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Elk Grove California via Rev. Fr. John Enyinnaya

Ms. Tracey Weddle

Peace Project Students in Prof. E. Uwazie's criminal justice class on restorative justice and conflict resolution, Spring 2015, California State University, Sacramento:

Ms. Radtana Lee

Mr. Ryan Murphy

Ms. Daisy Contreras

Ms. Kara Hallsten

Mr. Richard Cervantes

Mr. Nick Tang

Mr. Brian Acevedo

Mr. Moises Millan

Mr. Henry Szeto

Mr. Miles Brittsan

Mr. Jacob Lohrengel

Mr. Kevin Schroeder



Dr. Nnenna Uwazie - 2015 Keynote Speaker of the Victor Uwazie Memorial Library Peace Education Lecture on *"Managing Diabetes and High Blood Pressure in Nigeria"* at the Comprehensive Secondary School, Umuezeala Ogwara, Ehime-Mbano, Imo State, Nigeria.

Afripeace President Dr. Ernest Uwazie presenting medical supplies to the community health clinic in Nigeria. Medical supplies were donated by the Allwell Pharmacy & Medical Supplies, Sacramento, California



**A cross-section of the community with Prof Uwazie
at the 2015 Peace Education lecture**



A cross-section of the community with Prof. Uwazie at the 2015 Peace Education lecture.



A cross-section of the students at the 2015 Peace Education lecture

Photos from the first Afripeace fundraiser, September 2015, *An Evening Under the Stars*, with music, food, and auction at the Country Day Secondary School plaza.

Thank you for your support!



Live music and entertainment



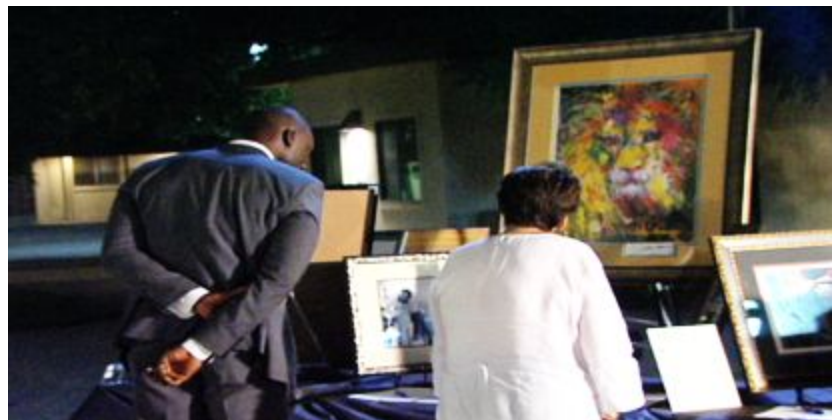
Attendees enjoy fine music, company, and food & wine tasting



Director Ernest Uwazie welcomes Pacific Auctioneer



Pacific Auction rep taking stock of the auction items



Attendees bidding in the silent auction for artwork



Afripeace Youth Peace Applicant

Afripeace Board of Directors:

- Ernest Uwazie, *President* ▫ Pam Bodnar, *VP, Programs* ▫ Patricia Holmes, *Secretary*
- Wilmot Mitchell, *Finance Officer* ▫ John Igwe ▫ Frank Uwazie ▫ Charlene Harris

News & Updates:

Now Recruiting

Afripeace Board of Directors

Recruiting prospects with interest or skills in event planning, social media, fundraising, and program development/marketing. 3 year term, beginning 2016, renewable. For more information or application: Ernest Uwazie, afripeacefoundation@gmail.com, or 916-743-8373.

High School Students for 2017 Summer Youth Peace & Cultural Education in Ghana

www.afripeace.org | P.O. Box 293924, Sacramento, CA 95829

Announcements

10th Anniversary of the Youth Peace & Cultural Education Program/Reunion:
September 24, 2016

- ★ Congratulations to our youth leaders in Nigeria for the official recognition and incorporation of the Afripeace Sustainable Development Foundation- Nigeria!